



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROD BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 16, 2005

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Gov. Blagojevich continues rebalancing state's long-term health care system

New initiative will keep seniors independent

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois seniors will have more opportunities to regain independence by staying in their own homes rather than being confined to a nursing home, thanks to Governor Rod Blagojevich's Fiscal Year 2006 budget proposal which aims at rebalancing the state's long-term health care system.

"I've never met an older person who wants to live in an institution rather than in the comforts of their own home," said Charles D. Johnson, Director of the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA). "Seniors seem much happier and more productive when they're in a familiar environment."

IDoA's FY 2006 proposed budget is about \$446.3 million, which represents an overall increase over the Department's FY 2005 appropriation. The Department's proposed budget includes funding to:

- Assist nursing home residents in their transition into independent living by helping them with rent payments, utility bills, groceries, etc.
- Apply for federal grants for outreach and assistance programs that will help seniors choose an appropriate prescription drug plan
- Increase Medicaid enrollment to maximize federal reimbursement
- Strengthen the Department on Aging's ability to investigate claims of abuse by care providers, which will further protect seniors from neglect, abuse and exploitation

- more -

Add1/Illinois Department on Aging

IDoA is responsible for serving and advocating for Illinois' two million senior citizens. The department provides a comprehensive service delivery system to serve the state's seniors in coordination with 13 Area Agencies on Aging.